

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTORS

Department of Economics
University of California, Berkeley
May 2020

Logistics:

You can find the location and time of your lectures and all discussion sections for your class [here](#).

You can find a map of campus [here](#).

The academic calendar for UC Berkeley is available [here](#).

Classroom Technology:

You can get classroom technology support [here](#). This page is worth perusing carefully. Some things of particular interest include: Basic information about classrooms available [here](#). ETS also offers classroom orientation (a private orientation of the particular classroom you will be using). You can request such an orientation [here](#). The classroom AV Help Desk number is 510-643-8637.

“Berkeley Time”:

At Berkeley the convention is that lectures/sections/seminars/etc. start 10 minutes after the official start time and end at the official end time. For example, if you lecture time is 3:30pm-5:00pm, your lecture should start at 3:40 and end at 5:00pm. The 10 minutes are meant to allow students to get between classes.

Course Website (bCourses):

The course websites at UC Berkeley are available [here](#). You need to create and post the website for your course. Some of the more useful features of the course website are the ability to email the class, post files for the class, post grades of assignments, create discussion boards, view student photos, etc.

[Here](#) is a page on how to get started on bCourses.

[Here](#) is a different page with information about how to get started.

[Here](#) is more information including a link to schedule a consultation.

Graduate Student Instructors

Graduate student instructors (GSIs) are unionized at Berkeley and their work is governed by a collective bargaining agreement. The most important aspect of this for you as an instructor is the workload clause which states the following:

a. A GSI with a 50% appointment shall not be assigned a workload of more than 220 hours per quarter or 340 hours per semester. This standard shall apply proportionately to other percent appointments.

b. In addition, a GSI with an appointment of 50% or less shall not be assigned a workload of more than 40 hours in any one week or assigned to work more than eight (8) hours in any one day. The number of hours worked in excess of twenty (20) hours per week may not total more than 50 hours per quarter or 77 hours per semester.

The 340 hours per semester works out to 20 hours per week. So, the basic idea is 20 hours per week with some weeks being less and some more (e.g., midterm and final grading times). The official appointment period for the fall semester is August 1st to December 31st and for the spring semester is January 1st to May 31st.

Below, please find a few guidelines about what GSIs are expected to do and what they are not expected to do. These guidelines are not mandatory. Rather, they are suggestions and recommendations.

What is expected of GSIs:

1. Attend lecture
2. Hold discussion sections (and create material for such sections)
3. Hold office hours (2 hours per week is typical)
4. Grade problem sets, papers, and exams
5. Create answer sheets for problem sets and exams
6. Proctor exams
7. Maintain student records (grades)
8. Hold pre-exam review sessions
9. Manage DSP accommodations, coordinating with DSP office
10. Field emails from students

What is not expected of GSIs:

1. Write problem sets and exams
2. Give lectures
3. Assign course grades

[Here](#) is a useful guide to working with GSIs.

It is important to be in touch with your GSIs as early as possible to decide which GSI will teach which section and to decide on office hours for each GSI. If scheduling conflicts imply that your GSIs are not able to teach the sections for your course, you should contact the head GSI for the Economics Department immediately (headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu).

Enrollment Inquiries from Students:

You may receive emails from students asking to take the class even though it is full. All such requests should be forwarded to the Head GSI of the Department at (headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu). You can simply respond to such requests as follows: "Enrollment is out of my hands, please talk to the Head GSI about this issue." Off the record: There are usually a few slots that can be filled at the discretion of the department. If you forward all requests to the Head GSI he/she will fill these in cooperation with

Student Services. But if you have a desire to make a pitch for a student who has contacted you, you can send such a pitch to the head GSI.

Mandatory Section Attendance during the First Week of Class

It is the policy of the Economics Department that student attendance at the first discussion section of the semester is mandatory. Note that this discussion section may be before your first lecture. Students that do not attend this session are dropped from the class (unless they get instructor approval to not attend). The reason for this is that many classes in the department have long waiting lists. This is one way we use to clear students that are enrolled but do not intend to take the class off the class roster as soon as we can.

The Economics Head GSI will send out the exact dates of mandatory section attendance before the start of each semester and interact with your GSIs about taking attendance and reporting the attendance back to him/her.

Syllabus:

Here are a few guidelines about information to include in your syllabus:

1. A list of the assignments in the class and how the grade on each assignment will factor in the overall course grade. If there are other components of the overall course grade (e.g., participation), this should be listed clearly.
2. An exposition of how grade disputes will be handled.
3. An explanation of rules (or etiquette) regarding students working together on assignments, if applicable.
4. An explanation of rules (or etiquette) regarding use of electronic devices during lecture and sessions.
5. Your policy regarding academic honesty (cheating).
6. Timing of your final exam (see below for where to find this).

Please feel free to ask the Vice Chairs for examples.

Final Exam Schedule:

You can find information about the timing of the final exam for your class [here](#).

Textbooks / Course Packets:

You can order textbooks for your class [here](#). Officially speaking orders are due 5 months before the start of the semester.

[This page](#) is useful regarding copyright issues and creating a course packet

Disability Accommodations

You will receive emails from the Disabled Students Program (DSP) alerting you to disability accommodations that have been granted to students in your class. When you receive such an email, you

should follow the link to download the accommodation letter for the student and then make sure to grant the requested accommodations. The most common accommodations are extra time on exams.

You can ask your GSIs to manage DSP issues. You will need to assign them as proxies with the DSP office.

You can request that DSP proctor exams for students with special disability accommodations for you. For more information, consult [this page](#). You need to send proctoring requests to DSP at least two weeks before your first exam. It is possible that DSP will not grant your proctoring request. The Economics Head GSI can also help find proctors and a room for special exams (headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu).

Grading – Gradescope

Gradescope is an online tool to help make grading more efficient which is quite popular with GSIs in the department. Berkeley has a Gradescope license. For more information, see [this page](#). Your GSIs are likely to be familiar with Gradescope.

Midterm Deficient Grades

Instructors are required to submit midterm status grades for any undergraduate student who at the end of the 8th week in the semester is earning a deficient grade of D+, D, D-, F, or NP for the class.

For more information, consult [this page](#).

Assigning Final Grades

Grades are assigned at [CalCentral](#) (see more detail below).

Grading guidelines can be found [here](#).

[BerkeleyTime](#) is very useful to get a sense for the grade distribution in your class or other related classes in the past.

To assign grades, first go to [CalCentral](#). Click on “My Academics” towards the top of the page. You should then see a list of your courses and should be able to click on an option to start grading. Once you are on the grade roster page for a particular course, you can download the course roster and match it up with grades you may have in a separate spreadsheet. When doing this, make sure to match on “Student ID”, not name. Matching on name can in rare cases lead to mismatching when names are similar.

A tricky aspect of assigning grades is the P / NP (i.e., “pass”, “no pass”) grades. You need to manually convert letter grades that you have assigned to P / NP for the students taking the class pass-fail. The normal conversion is that a C- and above is a P, and a D+ and below is an NP. There is a “Grading Basis” column in the CSV file that you download. This column will list GRD for students taking the class for a regular letter grade. It will list EPN for student taking the class pass-fail. The CSV file also has a column called “Comments”. When you convert the letter grades to P/NP, make sure to copy the letter grade that the student would have received into this “Comments” column. If you do not to this, you will get errors when uploading the CSV file back into the system. For students getting a P, no further action is

needed. But for students getting an NP, after you upload the grades into the system, you need to manually list a reason from a drop-down panel.

You may receive requests for an “Incomplete” grade. Here are the rules regarding incompletes:

- Incomplete grades **are appropriate** if the ALL of the following criteria are met:
 - Student has completed at least 50% of the course work and is currently *passing* the course.
 - Student is unable to complete the course for extenuating circumstances beyond their control (i.e. mental health concerns, family emergency, illness, etc.).
 - Student has been in touch with you about their concerns for not being able to complete the course work.
- Incomplete grades **are NOT appropriate** if...
 - Student missed the final exam/did not turn in paper/etc. and reasons are unknown.
 - Student is failing the class.

If you have determined that an incomplete grade is appropriate given a student's circumstances, you must complete incomplete Contract which you can find [here](#). It requires your signature, the student's signature, and a clear deadline date for the work to be completed. The deadline date can be set to whatever works for you and the student, but must align with the [specific deadlines](#) for incomplete grades. Submit the completed contract to ugrad@econ.berkeley.edu.

Course Resilience

Please make sure to store essential information regarding your class (e.g., grades) in a manner that is resilient to an emergency (e.g., you or one of your GSIs having a serious accident or illness). Storing all grades on bCourses is one commonly-used way to do this.

If you become unable to teach because of an accident or illness, please contact the Vice Chair, Chair, Phil Walz, or Patrick Allen so that we can work to make alternative arrangements for instruction in the course. It is prudent to make your spouse aware of who to contact in the event of such an emergency.

Contacts:

Co-Vice Chairs of the Department: Jon Steinsson (jsteinsson@berkeley.edu) and Emi Nakamura (enakamura@berkeley.edu)

Issues with location and time of classrooms: Michelle Fong (fong.michelle@berkeley.edu)

Issues with GSIs/Readers and enrollment inquiries by students: Preston Mui (headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu)

Director of Student Services: Patrick Allen (pallen@econ.berkeley.edu)